

The Commonweal

August 24, 1951

The New Expansionism

Total assault calls for total defense

MAX FISCHER

One Crisis After Another

A report from France

ROBERT BARRAT

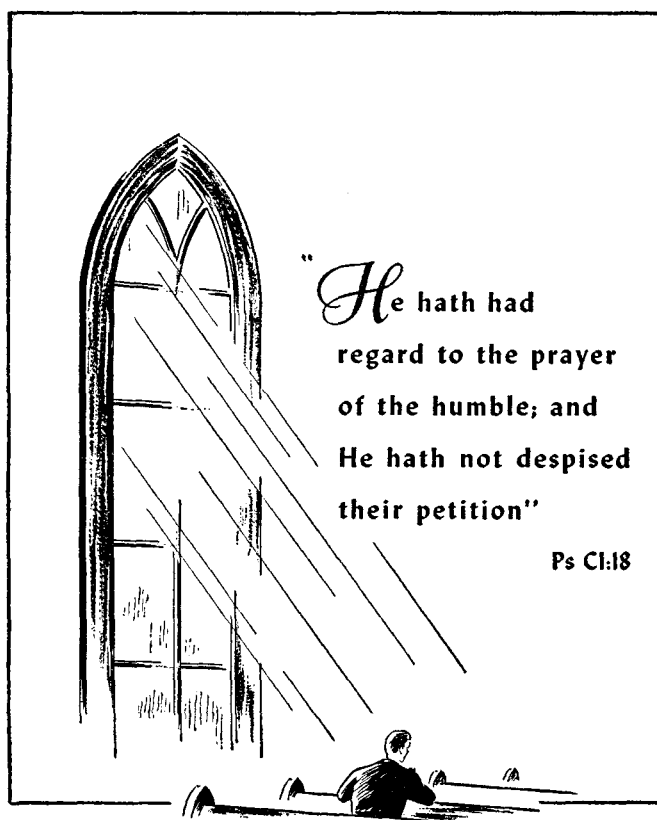
A Note on Jacques Riviere

MARTIN TURNELL

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

The Two Berlins

THE "World Festival" in East Berlin has reached its climax. Nearly a million young people have marched past the reviewing stands singing and shouting Stalinist slogans. Along the line of march there were red banners galore, giant portraits of Stalin and other Communist leaders, glorified panoramas of life in the USSR, and the flags of many nations, including Britain's and our own. All the color and fury of this belligerent demonstration for peace contrasted sharply with the part of the city in which it took place, with its buildings still bombed out and its inhabitants shabbily dressed and dolefully lethargic.

The authorities arranged two weeks of lectures, games, concerts and other festivities—professional dance groups, ballet corps and "people's choirs" were much in evidence. Walter Ulbricht, Communist leader of the East Germans, profited by the occasion to instruct these young people in blue uniforms as to their duties back home. To the delegates from Western Germany he gave special instructions about fomenting strikes, intimidating local inhabitants, refusing to pay taxes and sabotaging rearmament.

In all it was an impressive demonstration of discipline and loyalty on a mass scale. The Communists had done their work well. As with the Hitler Youth, from which the Communists so easily took over, every pressure is exerted upon East German youth to join the Young Pioneers (ages 6 to 14) and the "Free German Youth" (14 to 24). There are many inducements of a positive sort, while failure to belong excludes one from camps, excursions, sports facilities and cheaper theater tickets. Without belonging to the official youth groups it is extremely difficult to obtain a higher education.

By these and other methods the East German Communists have succeeded in enrolling some three million young people in their organizations. They often develop each youthful adherent to

the point that he will check up and report to the authorities on teachers, clergy and even his own parents. In many respects there is a negligible difference between the old brown shirt groups and the blue shirts in East Germany.

The one uncertain factor in these mass demonstrations is the opportunity they afford for contact with West Berlin. The Soviets had set up road-blocks on 150 of the streets connecting the two separately-administered cities. Official gateways between the two were cut to 23. The "People's Police" kept a check on the subways and overhead railway lines between East and West Berlin.

But the ardent curiosity and perennial resourcefulness of youth were not to be denied. They took their chances on the subways, after divesting themselves of their uniforms. They filtered in through unpatrolled side streets. Hundreds of thousands managed to get a glimpse of West Berlin; some 1,500 even sought refuge there.

Most of these poorly shod visitors went in heavily for window shopping and marvelled at what they saw. They were plied with peach melbas and other soft drink parlor concoctions which must have made the ices available across the line seem very watery indeed. A number of them were regaled with good hot meals which supplied another basis for comparison.

BUT there are limitations to what can be proved by showing simply that poverty is much less acute in the German Western zones. It does, to be sure, cast piercing doubts about official propaganda when visitors from the East find the supposedly starving German workers in West Berlin much better dressed and better fed than in East Germany. A comparison of the availability and prices of consumers' goods in Berlin stores provides another shock. Besides, the atmosphere of the Western areas of the city is noticeably more relaxed.

Are the experiencing of these contrasts and

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the unmasking of certain lies in the course of a short visit sufficient to offset years of unopposed indoctrination and ironclad control? There is a direct connection between the poverty behind the Iron Curtain and a Soviet system which, among other things, concentrates on guns instead of butter. But our argument would carry greater weight with these subject peoples if it would focus on the democratic freedoms and Western aspirations for the human person.

Wild Rider

CONGRESS is under constant two-way pressure in peace and war in the matter of appropriations. On the expansive side there are the lobbyists and the letters from back home pressing for special legislation. Business often leads the counter and ever-needed demand for government economies. That the final action on appropriations should veer in either direction from the dimensions indicated by the common good is inevitable.

There have been few more notorious instances of this in late years than the recent House action on Mr. Truman's request for \$30,000,000 for this country's current contribution to the UN and other international agencies. For the House not only cut ten percent from the sum requested but added the arbitrary rider that henceforth the United States should contribute no more than one-third of any international agency's annual budget.

This would somewhat affect the UN, and its various agencies, to which the American contri-

bution ranges from 35 to 39 percent. But for inter-American organizations such a stipulation, if also agreed to by the Senate, would be disastrous. At present we are footing some two-thirds of the expenses of the Pan American Union and its subsidiary organizations.

It is doubtful whether our budgetary patriots would pay much heed to the argument that our two-thirds contribution to the Pan American Union would be appreciably higher (up to 90 percent) if based on national incomes and the consequent ability to pay. But before holding fast to their flat and arbitrary figure the members of the House might consider whether the continuance of the Pan American Union is to our national interest or whether it is not. How is it possible anyway to encompass such complexities in a simple arithmetical formula?

Break with the Farm Bureau

IN THE course of its Montreal meeting the American Federation of Labor has seen fit to sever its ancient relations with the American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Grange, the nation's oldest and most powerful farm organizations. The immediate issue was the opposition of the Farm Bureau and the Grange to anti-inflation controls, but the break has a far wider significance.

It bears witness, at last, to the changed character of American agriculture and consequently of the two leading farm organizations. Mechanization on a large scale, mass production and corporate ownership have made farming in America more and more of a straight commercial enterprise. It is no accident that on government controls, and other national legislation in which they were interested, the Grange and the Farm Bureau have lobbied in concert with such big business organizations as the National Association of Manufacturers. Also the farm bloc in Congress—and the agricultural committees—have tended to be the representatives of certain commodities such as wheat, corn, cotton, etc., which for the most part means the big growers.

The interests of the farm laborer and the small farmer, however, have tended to converge more and more toward those of the urban worker. So that this move by the AFL does not represent a split between city and countryside but rather the reverse. It helps clear the way for a concerted family farmer-labor attack on many

• NEXT WEEK •

ROCKWOOD CHIN of Berea College writes an article on America's ideological strategy in the cold war.

"Communism as an ideology can only be fought by better ideas practiced at home and abroad. At home this strategy demands the mobilization of human and spiritual resources—as well as material—for the maintenance of a truly democratic system, racial equality, a stable and equitable economy and a healthy population. By adopting liberal measures for political, economic and social reform the United States can avoid deficiencies which are exploited in glaring terms by Russian propaganda."

problems. It fits in well with the Administration's new attempt to bolster the family farm by increasing its productivity and thereby to lead to more plentiful food at lower prices all round.

Without Malice

MR. AND Mrs. Harvey Clark, the young Negro couple whom the citizens of Cicero, Illinois put out on the streets, had occasion a few days ago to come to New York City to receive a gift of over seven hundred dollars, presented to them by a remarkably able radio showman who collected the money, much of it in dribbles, from his stay-up-after-midnight audience in the New York area. In the course of being presented with the money—which is to be used, incidentally, to replace a piano that was broken up by the rioting mob in Cicero, a piano that the Clarks had gotten, after many months of saving, so that their eight-year-old daughter might learn to play—Mr. Clark was asked if he intended to try again to move into his apartment in Cicero. He said he did, in the hope that eventually something good, for the Negro and for the country, might come out of the whole episode.

Then Mrs. Clark was asked if she did not look with great fear upon the prospect of their returning to Cicero. She replied that her worst fear was for her two children, since she and her husband had received the worst of warnings about what might happen if they tried to send the children to school in Cicero. Mrs. Clark went on to say that although she had not yet decided what to do about the school problem, she thought that she would like to send the children to a Catholic school—even though she and her husband are not Catholics—because, she said, the priests and the sisters teach that it is a sin to practice racial hatred.

These words, spoken in the early hours of the morning in a New York restaurant, should not, we feel, be allowed to die away without having been relayed somehow to every Catholic in the country. For in one way or another, every Catholic in the country is involved in those words of Mrs. Clark's. Either he has, by his example, had something to do with putting that idea of Catholic charity in Mrs. Clark's mind, or by his example of another kind, he has proved himself not worthy of the high honor she has paid him.

Which is it to be now in Cicero? Who will prevail there—the Catholic Mrs. Clark hopes to find, or the Catholic who, like some of us, has

not always done what he could for the Negro and who has been, therefore, like a dead weight carried along by his fellow Christians?

Through the great kindness of a radio broadcaster who happens to be of the Jewish faith, the Clarks have a new piano and a new belief in their fellow man. Now the question is, what will they receive from us?

It is not for the Catholics of Cicero alone to answer that question. For what Mrs. Clark has asked of us, very simply and without even a trace of malice, is a chance to live in honor and in peace with her neighbor. She is not likely to see that day unless each one of us is ready to answer, without malice, the Mrs. Clark in our own vicinity.

Alarms

MR. ADOLPH A. BERLE, JR., a former Under Secretary of State, made a speech the other day in which he said the following: "The silent experts of the intelligence services reckon the chance about even that Moscow will begin her open push this year by the classic route of a Balkan war."

One wonders: are the "silent experts" of our intelligence services silent or are they not? If they are, how does Mr. Berle know what is in their minds? If they are not, what are they doing in the intelligence services and what are they doing telling their secrets to Mr. Berle, who is no longer a Government official?

This statement of Berle's was picked up and given wide circulation. Undoubtedly Mr. Berle had nothing but the best intentions in making it. It may be that he is apprehensive lest the American people be lulled to sleep by a possible truce in Korea.

That, surely, is something to sound a warning about. But it seems to us that this is no time to be setting off alarms on other fronts unless you are very sure of what you are talking about.

All of us are pretty much aware of the fact that we are living on the verge of atomic destruction. We are trying to prevent that holocaust by building up our military strength to a point sufficient to discourage an aggressor.

This is certainly a risky business. It is tough on the nervous system but it must be done and done without loose talk. Mr. Berle would be well advised not to move in on Drew Pearson and Walter Winchell. They are doing quite enough as it is to spread the seeds of hysteria on the wind of our Sunday evening.

The Only Sadness

A WRITING man starts off usually as a reading man and after he has looked into Shakespeare—there are others but he need not go beyond Shakespeare—his hopes and ambitions are forever somewhat limited. No matter how young he is and even if he has never yet written a line so that just about anything seems possible, he knows that however things turn out he will always be standing on a little ladder looking up to the master.

It's something like the situation facing the young would-be saint. The greatest saint has already lived and there are others like Francis of Assisi who it seems will always tower no matter how high the Christian places his goal.

I remember that when I was preparing for First Communion the nun said God chose the most perfect human being to be His Mother. There would never be another like her. I was seven years old and for those few weeks anyway, I wanted very much to be a saint. It seemed unfair that no matter how successful the attempt, the pinnacle had already been reached and there was no hope of ever scaling it.

Surely that was an infantile view of the grace of God and of sanctity itself. But I remember the robbed feeling and I remember too that it cast a shadow over what we were solemnly told would be the happiest day of our lives. It seems very likely that I rationalized the first childish sin after that brief moment of innocence by arguing that if you can't be the best why try. I don't remember that; I only recall, over the years, the vague pious jealousy, if that it was, and the defrauded feeling.

Later there was a lesson about the thimble and the barrel and how each filled to capacity is full. But by that time I'm afraid the passion for sanctity had subsided.

I remember the same feeling on a less exalted level. That was in 1928 when it seemed to be made clear beyond doubt that no Catholic would ever be President of the United States. Maybe now it isn't as clear as it seemed to us then. I don't know how the nun explained it to us but she must have gotten the idea across (as Negro and Jewish mothers must when the question arises) because I remember there was a definite hour when that bitter understanding of political reality was added to our knowledge.

We were only little kids but we took a deep interest in that election because upon its outcome hung our hopes to share in the great American schoolroom dream. After the Happy Warrior's stunning defeat the nuns in school could still joke about our being bishops some day but it would no longer have been good taste to mention the presidency. After 1928 when we read the Lincoln legends in class all that might have seemed possible before the fateful election was now painfully remote. As I remember it, there was a final paragraph about the highest office's being open to every American boy. A kind of you too can be an Abe Lincoln gimmick. When the sister came to it she was embarrassed. No comment.

There was the day when one learned that for hundreds of years the Pope had been an Italian. It seemed that too was the way things were and not much could be done about it. I don't know how long we clung to the economic Horatio Alger creed, but for most of us, I suspect, that went also, not too painfully.

Anyway there was plenty of preparation for the knowledge that the greatest writer had written. And one didn't have to go back to Shakespeare. Even though Hemingway may not be the greatest since 1616, he is what he is, which is something pretty wonderful. And Hemingway was only one of several living giants.

First there was the certain fact that the highest seat is forever taken; then the knowledge that one would always have to look up, way, way up to certain contemporaries; then acceptance of the idea that the word one has to live with is mediocrity; finally acceptance of the journalist's regular stint. A certain day, a certain hour and something must be ready to send off to the printer.

When you're still very young, newly dazzled by the grandeur of the great words there on the library shelf for the asking, it rarely seems like it's going to be that way. The 'literary' kid in school reading, reading, reading and planning rich wonderful words of his own does not think of it that way. But for most writing men and women, that's the way it turns out. The words come but they aren't as rich or as wonderful as one hoped they would be. After awhile just to be read is enough.

Still the writing people keep writing. Millions of words every day; dozens of first novels every season, forgotten by the same time next year, and behind almost every one the same burning young hope and anguish. A few go on to write a second novel, fewer yet to a third and a fourth.

I hope it doesn't seem sacrilegious to say that again it's like the pursuit of sanctity. A very few make it, and the price they pay is discipline, steadfastness to an ideal and plain hard work. But the majority, as is the case with most of those who at some glorious moments in their lives have been consumed with the desire for greater holiness, slip into mediocre ways. Still the fierce memory of the ideal and the ambition are always there . . . and the bad conscience.

The average hack writer is like the average Christian: neither wholly bent by, nor wholly free of the guilt burden. Both are haunted, however faintly, by an old ideal. When one matures it no longer is regret that one is a thimble not a barrel but the realization that even the tiny thimble's potentialities are not fully sounded.

For the Christian there is the confessional with its sorrow for sin, firm purpose of amendment and fresh sense of beginning. If something like the confessional could be found for the writer, something that would periodically restore the sense of dedication, not only our literature but our journalism would gain. Every man who has ever fallen in love with words is forever bound to an ideal that can be recalled and made to glisten again.

JOHN COGLEY.

The New Expansionism

Since World War II the balance of power
has shifted from Western Europe to Eurasia.

By MAX FISCHER

AT the outbreak of the Second World War, Soviet territory extended over an area of 8,173,700 square miles and contained a population of more than 170 millions. Since then this state has acquired almost 300,000 square miles with more than 22 million people.

But even these figures do not tell the real story of the Kremlin's expanding power. Communists who receive their directives from Stalin have taken over eleven entire countries west and east of the Soviet Union, with 4 million square miles of territory and almost 600 million inhabitants. Stalin's subordinates rule the eastern parts of both Germany and Austria as well as that part of Korea north of the thirty-eighth parallel.

This, of course, amounts to a radical change in the world power balance, creating a solid Communist block of Asiatic and European territory, extending from the Bering Sea to the heart of Central Germany and the Adriatic Coast, and from there again to Hainan and Korea. Thus an immense continental bloc has been brought under the direction of one political system, controlled by a small clique that is able to enforce its commands in this whole vast area.

Look at the map and you will realize that the countries around this area—from Scandinavia through Western Europe, the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern states, the Indies, Indonesia and Japan—form only a small girdle around this great landmass.

This is a geopolitical situation such as the world has never seen before. Though the non-Communist world has been surprised at the rapid extension of Communist power, it is now beginning to be aware of the horrifying consequences of this great concentration. The desire of this Communist power bloc to extend to the seas menaces the small outer crescent of peninsulas and islands still enjoying freedom and the pursuit of their cultural traditions.

To many of our contemporaries the realization of these facts has been a terrifying awakening. But this global perspective had, in fact, been fore-

seen nearly half a century ago with unusual clarity by an English professor of geography. At that time, on January 25, 1904, Sir Halford Mackinder, Professor at the University of London, read an amazing paper to the Royal Geographic Society.

In this lecture, entitled "The Geographical Pivot of History," Mackinder attempted to survey the geographic conditions that had shaped the history of mankind. He described the age of Columbus as a time of European expansion when there was only negligible resistance. The Middle Ages he described as a period during which Western civilization was pent up between dynamic aggressors: Mongols, Saracens and Norsemen. Mackinder pointed out that in 1900 Western civilization again seemed to be blocked as it was a millenium before. There were no longer worlds to discover, Sir Halford said; all continents had been divided among the nations. Peace, he said, can only be secured now through a careful balance of power.

In this situation, any explosion of new forces must have violent repercussions in a world where there is no longer any surplus space to be conquered and settled. No room is left any longer and therefore there is no opportunity to escape from the frictions of power into still unsettled areas.

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THE whole of political history was plainly, according to Professor Mackinder's interpretation, the conflict between the great landmass of Asia and the cradles of higher civilization on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean, and the Indian and Pacific oceans. The hordes from the Eurasian steppes again and again endangered the higher civilizations along the coasts and the great river valleys; but through sea power and superior organization, the civilized states were able to defend themselves and to repulse the barbarians.

The inventions of the 19th century, Mackinder said, revolutionized the development of the central landmass. Transcontinental railways replaced the horse and the camel and produced a revolution in military strategy. Today the airplane continues to add to this new mobility. Thus the old balance between sea power and land

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power has been shaken by these technological developments. Radio makes even thought more mobile, increasing the dynamic energy of the landmass that had been before so vulnerable to expanding sea power. "The oversetting of the balance of power in favor of the pivot state, resulting in the expansion over the marginal lands of Eurasia, would permit even the use of vast continental resources for fleet building. The empire of the world would then be in sight."

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WHEN Mackinder expounded his views, they were regarded by most of his listeners as the fantastic exaggerations of a learned Cassandra. In our day they do not seem so at all. Scandinavia we think of as a little appendix to the Communist landmass, Western Europe a manylimbed but small territory on the outermost western end of the land colossus; Greece, Turkey, the Arabian world, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Hindustan, Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indo-China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Formosa, South Korea and Japan—all seem to be very small outer edges compared to the vast spaces of Russia and China. No thinking observer who sees the present extension of Stalin's realm can overlook the terrible pressure of this landmass on its outer edges. He can face the latent possibilities of further expansion only with a feeling of fear and sorrow.

It is true, the marginal powers have one great thing in their favor: they are heirs to a cultural tradition and a profound religious consciousness and this makes them intellectually and morally superior to the inhabitants of the gigantic landmass. But are wars between power coalitions won by moral and intellectual qualities? Is it not technical superiority that enables a minority to win a war against a numerically stronger enemy? But unlike the deeper values of civilization, technological matters can be learned and imitated easily. The development of the steam engine, of electro-dynamics, of air traffic and television are certainly accomplishments of Western civilization; but they are easily adapted and are on the way to becoming common goods of all mankind. The rulers of the Eurasian landmass are or will be able to use them as well as the marginal powers. But their nearly inexhaustible population gives to the continental powers a great advantage in the use and abuse of these technical accomplishments.

The military strength of the land colossus is tightly harnessed by the dictatorial power of Communist leadership. The doctrinaire Communist belief that the Kremlin is guiding the world to an earthly paradise gives a touch of Messianic exaltation to the possibilities latent in this power.

Sir Halford was convinced that this great con-

tinental landmass, which he called the "pivot area" or the "heartland," might develop into the strongest power on earth, and that those who dominated the land colossus in its day of superior technical achievement might be able to overpower the crescent of islands and peninsulas surrounding it.

Mackinder did not develop these ideas to paralyze his listeners with panic; he was a British patriot who believed that the cultural values of the Occidental world were indispensable to the civilization of mankind and that the world of the marginal civilizations ought to be saved. To him it was evident that the menace of the pivot area could not be overcome by the separate efforts of the powers of the marginal world; only by adopting a policy of daring encirclement of the landmass could its power be contained.

I hope that today we are on the way to an integration of all the marginal powers into a common front. But this alignment has been started dangerously late; while the Kremlin was already prepared for its policy of expansion during the Second World War, the West was confused and inconsistent. American policy has now achieved at least a system of cooperation with the non-Communist countries of Europe and this may develop in the next few years into a powerful bloc in defense of Western Europe.

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BUT can we really challenge the power of the heartland just by defending the European front? In a world in which only two power groups are left, you can't choose your front of defense: you are exposed to total aggression and have to prepare for total defense. To look at Asia just as an appendix to Europe and as an area which you may be able to take care of after settling the European war, may be impossible in the Third World War. Western Europe is no longer a world of concentrated power as it was before the Second World War; the balance of power has shifted to Asia and the weight of Asia will be felt more and more, while her nations are developing from colonial status to autonomous states. Therefore it is terribly frivolous to make the question of our defense in Asia an issue of national party politics. An encirclement of the pivot area is only possible if we integrate all the forces of Europe and Asia into an unbreakable power ring. The Atlantic Pact has to be followed up with a Pacific Pact and everything has to be done with utmost speed to organize all the anti-Communist forces of Asia into the one common effort.

Since the defeat of Napoleon and Hitler in the vast spaces of Russia, it is the conviction of most strategists that it is hopeless to wage war in such a territory with land armies advancing from with-

out—since the marginal states are unable to compete with the immense spaces and the large numbers of soldiers available in the pivot area. Under these circumstances our chances of success depend not so much on the strength of our land armies as on the strength of our navies and air forces and especially on our ideological strength.

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IN the geopolitical scheme of things, does there exist only this fascinating power concentration of the land colossus or is there left, even in our day, a power sphere centered on the ocean? This problem has been discussed in the work of a German disciple of Mackinder, *Geopolitics of the Pacific Ocean*, by Karl Haushofer, who later became a political adviser for the Third Reich. He warned Hitler to fight the Western sea powers and the Soviet colossus at the same time; but in vain. In his book Haushofer claims that the great decisions of the future will not be decided in the over-age world of the little European states but in the giant spaces of the Pacific, and he foresaw the great power of the United States. He anticipated the coming world showdown to be an inevitable clash between the powers of the steppes and the powers of the sea. He pointed at the steadily increasing density of population in the marginal regions of Asia and claimed that the leadership of all these growing Pacific nations might give the old sea powers a chance to overcome the menace of the land colossus.

Perhaps it might have been fruitful if these ideas had found a greater hearing in the West. It is evident that, from Haushofer's point of view, the recent course of events in China has to be thought of as a terrible defeat, depriving us of the collaboration of the most populous nation on the shores of the Pacific. But India and Pakistan, Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Indo-China, Indonesia, the Philippines, New Zealand, Australia and, last but not least, Japan, are left as potential members of our Pacific alliance. Instead of waiting for utopias and indulging in wishful expectation of some miracle of Titoism in China, we must hurry in order to save the still independent marginal states of Asia for freedom and to defend them from new attacks from the heartland.

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THE rulers of the Eurasian landmass have always had a tendency to expand toward the shores of the southern seas—aware of the fact that this union of land power and sea power would secure hegemony of the globe. Therefore we must regard the acquisition of the South China shores by the Communists as a great danger to the Western coalition. We have fortunately been able to countercheck the integration of Albania's

Adriatic coast into the Communist orbit by bringing Yugoslavia over to our side and thus isolating Albania from the land colossus.

After we have completed our defense system in Europe by including Franco's Spain and by searching for a practical manner in which to include German military power, we must concentrate our efforts on Asia in order to stop Communist expansion on its most successful front. We have to correct the inconsistency in our global policy and supplement our alliances in Europe with alliances in Asia. Just as we have brought all the nations of Europe into the common defense, so we must lead the free nations of Asia into our system instead of watching them play a frivolous "third" policy between the two power blocs. A revival of Mackinder's geopolitical ideas, supplemented by some Pacific applications of Haushofer's ideas, might be helpful in suggesting to the Western countries the deadly seriousness of their situation and in awakening their energies for the total defense that is needed. Thus they may perhaps be able to force the great land colossus to change its system and adopt the free world's way of life. But if such a peaceful solution cannot be accomplished, a ring encircling the Communist world may give us a chance to achieve victory in the event of another world war.

FROM FRANCE

One Crisis After Another

PETSCHÉ, Mayer, Queuille, Bidault, Reynaud, Petsché again—every morning for several weeks the average Frenchman has read his newspaper with drooping attention and found the name of a new candidate to lead France. After another 24 or 48 hours the same Frenchman found with calm indignation and mock surprise that we had not overcome the crisis and that M. Petsché or Mayer or Queuille, etc., had failed in his attempt to bring in the Peasant Independents, or the Popular Republicans or the republicans of the Right. And the little game went on: a new dance called every few hours. A president of the Council was named; he presented himself before the Chamber of Deputies and was turned down.

This little game could have gone on longer. Perhaps it could have lasted until September—indeed why not? Right now the French are on vacation. Why not put off serious matters till next month? The important happening, the only one which keeps the citizenry on tenterhooks, is, of all things, the *Tour de France*.

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But perhaps you do not know what the *Tour de France* is. All the worse for you; you do not know what you are missing. Kaesong, Indo-China, German rearmament, the threatening social crisis, the death of Marshal Pétain, have for the last two weeks been replaced in the banner headlines of French papers by the results of the daily heat of this bicycle race around France. Will the Frenchman, Louison Bobet, succeed in taking the yellow band (which symbolizes the championship) from the Swiss super-champion, Hugo Koblet? Will Fausto Coppi, the Italian with the legs, be able to ward off the slow exhaustion which has been stalking him ever since the race passed the Pyrenees?

Those are the only matters able to hold the attention of millions of vacationing Frenchmen who are today scattered along the beaches of the Atlantic, on the shores of the little Mediterranean inlets or throughout the countryside inland. France is enjoying siesta.

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DESPITE all the excitement, the recent parliamentary elections have not so far actually brought about any notable changes in our political situation.

Heaven knows why, but some people had expected no end of wonders. There was a six-months fight over the reform of the electoral law. The system of integral proportional representation was too rigid, people said, and did not take sufficiently into account the voter's opinion and his desire to choose his candidates himself. They therefore carefully rigged up a little electoral law which sought in principle to avoid all the disadvantages of proportional representation and voting by lists while at the same time retaining all the advantages.

Indeed the electoral law in effect on June 17 was the result of an astute deal among the members of the majority in power—Radicals, Popular Republicans, Socialists—to retain the maximum number of seats by eliminating as many Communists and Gaullists as possible. The principle of allied lists was simple. It meant that each party would present its own distinct lists of candidates. But the alliance of these parties nevertheless amounted to a half-hidden coalition by allowing the lumping together of all the votes received by the coalition in each district, so that it would account for all the seats, if this total reached fifty percent of the votes. In other words, you could vote for Monsieur X., Catholic Popular Republican, defender of the confessional school, but through the coalition system your vote was in danger of finding itself assigned to a Radical free mason, or an anti-clerical Socialist, enemy of the Christian school. That is what happened in certain *départements*. Let us admit the dishonesty of the procedure. It seemed that it was the only means of eliminating part of the Communists from the Chamber, of avoiding a Gaullist tidal wave and of having, at last, a Chamber which was governable.

The two first objectives were quite well fulfilled. Gaullists and Communists are assuredly not as heavily represented in the Chamber as they deserved to be. Flagrant as the injustice was for the Gaullists, it was still more so for the Communists. It has been estimated that

to win a seat the Communists needed 49,000 votes and the Gaullists 35,000—as against 27,700 for the Popular Republicans, 26,600 for the Socialists and 25,500 for the moderates or independents. So that while they lost but 8 percent of the vote they had in the elections five years ago, the Communists lost 42 percent of their seats. The Socialists, however, lost 19 percent of their vote, yet thanks to this marvelous system received 5 percent more seats. Those are the figures to be borne in mind in order to pass judgment on the election.

There is nothing to brag about as far as Communist losses go. For their loss is primarily seats in Parliament. As far as the number of votes goes, the defeat of the Communist Party was very mild. Consider all the anti-Communist propaganda of which the other parties had delivered themselves for five years, all the light that has been thrown on the policy of Stalin, the war in Korea, the purges in Central Europe and the defeats suffered by the Communist Party in France when it tried to call general strikes. What does seem surprising is, that the Communists lost only 500,000 votes.

If a man thinks it all over calmly, he will realize at once why so many French workers, who know nothing at all about Marxism and have no desire to experience Soviet prison camps, nonetheless give their votes to the Communist Party. The reason is that the Communist Party represents in their eyes, whether we like it or not, the only chance of bringing to an end unrelieved poverty, insecurity for the future and the nightmare of unprovided-for old age. We know that Communism would clearly be a poor bet for the proletariat, we know what sort of social order the Communists would set up if they ever came to power in our country. But we must admit, bitter as it is, that no other organized force in France is able to offer one ounce of hope to the exploited working class.

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AERICAN readers may think that we exaggerate when we speak of the frightful poverty of certain categories of French workers. Insufficient wages, cramped, dilapidated homes; the impossibility of taking a vacation if there are any children in the family, a poor state of health, lack of job security, the threat of unemployment—such is the lot of nearly a million working-class families.

At the Week of Catholic Intellectuals a missionary worker-priest told us: "There are in my district from 7,000 to 8,000 families (out of a total of 50,000 people) who pay exorbitant rent for a furnished room or a hovel. The monotony of their life with its rigid daily schedule, the wretched entertainment offered in the workers' quarters with its numbing, stultifying unvaried ration of movies, the lack of a decent place to live, the lack of a definite profession (so that young people under the pressure of family needs are obliged to hire out wherever they can, to do no matter what for no matter what pay), the lack of family security, relaxation, health and silence—all these sometimes succeed in emptying human beings of their substance. Sheer need robs them of every dignity and drives them, to put it crudely, into becoming street-walkers. . . ."

Is it surprising that the slogans of Communist propaganda make a profound impression on these uprooted people? Let me say it with all conviction: until our governments have done everything—even to the point of a social revolution—to put an end to this scandalous state of affairs, it is foolish to expect any decline in Communism in our country. The people of France will not be persuaded, for example, that it is possible to undertake an immense rearmament effort, when after five years of talk the country has not succeeded in getting under way a low-cost housing program worthy of the name.

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A SECOND observation is that the Gaullists failed to obtain the triumph they had expected—120 deputies when they had counted on 160 or 180. Since the municipal elections of 1947 the Gaullists have been losing ground (notably some 41 percent in Paris and 33 percent throughout the country). That stems no doubt from the haughty and unpopular rigor of the directives handed down by their leader and from the negative character of their electoral campaign. Their platform was in fact more of a negation than a program: rejection of parliamentarianism, of parties, etc. We are still waiting for the positive content of their program. The French people detected behind the Gaullist campaign a stale scent of personal power and Bonapartism. That is why many of them preferred to give their votes to the parties of the Center or to such groups as the Left Republicans or the Independents and Peasants.

The total failure of the neutralist candidates is also worth noting. Their leaders were Claude Bourdet (publisher of *l'Observateur*), scholar Paul Rivet, Jacques Madaule, Charles d'Aragon. Their electoral platform seemed to give promise of success: neither Washington nor Moscow, independence for Indo-China, maintenance and realization of the social gains of 1946—social security, nationalizations, etc.

Their leadership, however, was too heavily weighted with intellectuals, who were cut off from the masses, and their movement was too new. Also their propaganda was too general: international problems are remote to the general public. The only way to wage an effective electoral campaign in France is to deal with problems that are right down to earth—the price of beefsteak and of bread, wages, housing, for instance.

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FINALLY, contrary to expectations, the results of the elections did little to make the solution of the governmental problem any easier. With 103 seats for the Communists and 120 for the Gaullists, there remain in theory more than 400 for the other parties, which we call centrists. But these 400 members of the Chamber actually constitute an extremely heterogeneous group which is greatly divided as to the legislation needed.

There is the cleavage among them on economic and social problems, with the Popular Republicans and the Socialists on the progressive side and the Fourth Force more or less reactionary. The school question is an additional cause for division. We may be sure that the

Gaullists will always keep things stirred up on this question on which the Catholics are particularly sensitive and which keeps the Popular Republicans apart from the Socialists and the Radicals.

The question is whether in the end a coalition will be made of the three or four large center parties, or whether, yielding to the power of attraction of the Gaullists, the center parties as far Left as the Popular Republicans will constitute an anti-Marxist majority. Such an eventuality does not seem desirable. It would lead immediately to a revival of a Popular Front, which would cut the nation in two.

And here I must express confidence in the remarkable political talents of President Vincent Auriol. This man, with a pleasing way of speaking and a simple appearance, who is anything but a figurehead, is actually the most able tactician ever to reside at the Elysée presidential palace. For five years his authority over the party leaders has grown stronger day by day. It would not be rash to assert that he was prolonging the present crisis, allowing first this group and then that to demonstrate its impotence, to stew in its own juice, in order in the end to attain his objective: a Third Force-Fourth Force coalition government. The difficulties of arriving at a positive program on which our Center parties can agree will always be present, that is clear. But the prolonging of the crisis gave the deputies time to think things over, to take stock of their forces, to see where the dangers lie. It is better to have one long crisis, but only one, than a short crisis every two weeks as was the case before the war of 1940.

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OBVIOUSLY this whole political situation is not very encouraging. The criticisms that the enemies of the regime can make stand out clearly. These are the reproaches of the Gaullists: the weakness of a government dominated by parties which are divided against each other and the lack of any clearly defined policy for the future. To be sure, it may well be imagined what could be done for a country with as many resources as ours if there existed a power acceptable to all, able to bring together the energies of all citizens and unite their wills. Parliamentary democracy, let us admit, is not able to revive faith and confidence among the French people. It is a regime which is short lived and its governments can only be geometric expressions of the divisions, weaknesses and oppositions of the great spiritual families of France.

We recognize all that. But when we cast an eye on certain dynamic candidates we are alarmed by their lack of interest in economic and social problems and by the naiveté of the pompous formulas which hide the emptiness of their thought. Since the disappearance of the ancient monarchy, a system embodying a remarkable degree of wisdom (the power of the king was limited by a whole series of counsels and restraints) the experiences which the French people have had with personal power have invariably been agonizing and tragic. The recent elections show that they have not forgotten this.

ROBERT BARRAT.

AUGUST 24, 1951 475

The Tragedy at West Point

I DO NOT understand the young. I have taught them in their classrooms—on and off—for a good many years, and that disqualifies me.

I taught in Catholic colleges for many years, and I have known few men or women who would not cheat if they could. The very presence of proctors in an examination room is recognition of that fact. For it is clear that if men and women could be trusted, they would not need to be watched. Even so, I have known men and women who boasted that they could beat the proctoring system—and who did.

When I was a student in a Catholic college it was the habit of some students to go to Mass on the morning of an examination. To this was added the habit of dropping into the college chapel a few minutes before examinations began. Coming from Mass, or from a brief chapel visit, some of them proceeded to crib their way through an exam. Such a freshman was expelled from my college because he wrote a perfect English translation—from a paper hidden on his knees—of an ode of Horace. The difficulty was that he translated the wrong ode. He knew that little Latin. When I left college it no more occurred to me that men would not cheat than that they would not lie. Such a judgment was obviously shared by the Jesuits. For this was clearly the unstated premise of a proctoring system. A priest watching you throughout examination time gave silent notice of his lack of trust.

But it is difficult for me to place those four years in ethical perspective. If you do not trust your daughter it is likely that she will provide you with evidence for your lack of faith. Present men with a foolproof system, and they will try to beat it.

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ONE of the most vivid and persistent of my memories is my first examination at Boston University. That university had its origin in Methodism, and when I was there, about its buildings and its rooms was the quiet atmosphere of aloofness, withdrawal, dignity, propriety, which were, for me, the marks of the New England Protestant. All around me were people who, without any vanity, seemed to have canonized themselves.

To all of this I was acutely sensitive. For it was my first visit to non-Catholic education. Moreover, with this process of canonization I had been long familiar. It is the habit of mothers the world over to choose other children as living exemplars of the virtues they want their own children to possess. From this moral pointing

my own mother had not been immune. Emigrant from a country blood-spilled through centuries of religious prejudice; vividly, and almost angrily raised as an Irish Catholic; carrying tales of surrender to Protestant food in the famine, which to her was only a preserved legend—with all this, nonetheless, Protestant children carried the talisman of virtue. Their deeds were hung about my punished neck like an albatross. What I had done, they would not have done. Their fingers were never maculate with the same sins as were mine.

It was her undeviating contention that their fathers never got drunk. When I discovered that this was something less than true, she found refuge in the dignity—which meant the lack of violence—with which their drinking was accompanied. Even in their little sins she was able to find qualities of quietness and of grace. A moderation which was not always theirs she gave to them, so that she might exorcise some vigor from my inherited and imported blood and bone.

The lessons a mother gives her child form part of the corpuscles of his blood. They take up residence in your system; no antibodies of future experience have force wholly to evict them. They define your conduct in some measure always. They remain unspoken references in times of crisis, like the belief in Hell. They locate your background, subconsciously; as your speech is always identified with your mother's accent. They speak to you—her lessons—rebuking you in the conscientious night. Run your fingers through your moral wallet, and you will find them, like an old and yellowed clipping you had not seen in years. And, as with the clipping, too, some voice of fear, respect or parsimony adjures you to put them back again. Over your left shoulder, perhaps, a pair of cataracted eyes adjures you, like a priestly monitor. You cannot get rid of their currency, even if you would. You are between your mother and your daughter forever; and though your daughter does not hear her voice, nor ever see her, one by careful one, the same salutary alms are dropped into her moral purse.

Despite this my first examination at Boston University was a shock. For shortly after the examination began the instructor left the room. The large wooden door closed on him. We were unwatched and alone. I raised my eyes from my paper. Shame ran like flame into my face, as into a young girl's whose clothing some male, rude eyes have, in a horrid second, stripped from her. I was alone. No other eyes were curious, like mine. Unlike my own, none went wandering. I returned to my work rebuked by the moveless presence of absolute honesty. It was so strange, so different—so far from the scholastic work of nuns' children, so unlike the normal conduct of the sodality boys, the chapel troops, that I have never forgotten it. Nor will I.

But I have never known quite what to make of it. No one ever spoke to me of an honor system. I once took a make-up examination in the office of a history professor. All around me were his books. Yet he left me alone; and I left the finished paper on his desk. No words about honor or cheating passed between us. Obviously he took it for granted that I would not use his books.

Apparently he had been taking it for granted about students for years. So far as I know, no one ever cheated while I was in that school. No one ever referred to the honesty which characterized them, any more than one who sees talks about blindness.

I raise all this here because I am much less sure about the West Point episode than most who have written about it. The fact that one is presumably religious, and goes to a religious school, has nothing to do with honor or with honesty. I have too many years of evidence to be unsure about that. The fact that men pledge obedience to an honor system, whatever the sanction, is no guarantee that honor is saved. Perhaps because I am essentially naive, I do not know what makes men good. I do not know why some resist temptation, and some do not. I have known literal atheists and materialists who were good and honest men. I have known practicing religious men who were not. I do not know the answers. The rules, if there are any, escape me.

"A great wave of protectiveness went over him. He thought he knew what to do for her. He believed in character; he wanted to jump back a whole generation and trust in character again, as the eternally valuable element. Everything wore out."

Thus F. Scott Fitzgerald lets the father think about his little daughter in his celebrated short story, "Babylon Revisited." But what is character? From what training does it emerge, from whose discipline? The fact is that I do not know. I believe in it, as Fitzgerald did. But if my daughter becomes a saint, I shall not know how to account for it. Nor will I, if she becomes something a good deal less. In the latter case, I shall pray for her. Who would I be to rebuke her? Voltaire studied in a seminary; so did Talleyrand and Stalin. Many strange girls have come out of convents.

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MUCH is made, by the merely facile, about the fact that 44 of the dishonored 90 at West Point played football. Many, in consequence, want football abolished at the Point. But how do you account for the rest? Mr. Max Lerner, a very facile man indeed, thus accounts for it. The rest, he said, those "who helped them, seemed to have done it mainly out of their passion for West Point football victories." But there is no evidence for that conclusion, and Mr. Lerner is merely pontificating. We are all operating, so far, on little evidence.

Among the 90, an anonymous young man's statement seems to me to be the most poignant. "We are not corrupt," he said. "I go to Mass every week and have no feeling of guilt at all." He is nearer to this disturbing situation than the rest of us. But he tells a New York *Post* reporter: "I feel bitter about this because I don't think it was fair at all in the way it was handled. There was no cheating in the examination room. Some cadets took an examination and didn't like to refuse entirely when other cadets wanted to know something about it."

"It seems to me that we are the honest ones—we who admitted doing what has been done here commonly for years. I don't think the same examination should be

given to different groups on different days. The temptation to drop a hint or two is just too great."

One cannot say of this young man that he lacked religious training. His reference to "Mass" takes care of that. What, if I understand him, he wants is to be protected from temptation. He yielded to what all schools I have ever been in exhort men to value. It is called "loyalty to the school." It is a value I was fortunate enough to be born skeptical of. That one owes anything to a school—above oneself—has always struck me as a forcefully adolescent idiocy. But mine is not the feeling we try to inspire in our young.

"These men," the same youngster says, "the ones who are accused with me, are the kind I'd trust anywhere, the kind I'd be glad to go into battle with." Think what we like about it, the disturbing thing is that he may be right about that. One who has read Wedgewood's gracefully beautiful book, *The Thirty Years War*, or any book about the Crusades, knows that the spirit of the world was often saved by men with extremely scanty morals. The truth about the builders and saviors of our foundations is too difficult for us to accept. So we resort to the comfort of the legend. But it remains, as A. E. Housman has told us, that:

These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundations fled,
Followed their mercenary calling
And took their wages and are dead.

Their shoulders held the sky suspended;
They stood, and earth's foundations stay;
What God abandoned, they defended,
And saved the sum of things for pay.

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IT WAS a favorite saying of my father's that example is better than precept. I can summon up no iron anger either for these West Point young or at their dismissal. I can feel for these young only regret. We cannot be protected, as our young man seems to think, from temptation. We, all of us, ultimately live alone. Temptation does not come to us when we are in large groups. Its great advantage is that we are alone when it pays its seductive visits. *Esprit de corps* is a necessary and valuable possession. Without it armies have been lost and destroyed. But we resist temptation by ourselves. Ultimately we honor or dishonor ourselves.

Those of us who are moral failures have, therefore, no right to whine when we are punished. But in the fierce and abiding exercise of resistance we are not helped very much by the unctuous exhortation of our rhetorical elders. My father was right. Our elders—Army elders included—owe the young a better example than they have been giving them. West Point is not a fortress unreached by the prevailing moral tides. Our elders cannot do wrong daily in every facet of their daily lives, and be shocked at the young, and preach to them. But they do. That, I think, is the tragedy and the source of some of the guilt at West Point.

FRANCIS DOWNING.

AUGUST 24, 1951 477

The Screen

THE CHILD IS FATHER

I'M not sure whose idea it was to use a serious story about a maladjusted father-son relationship as the basis for comedy in the new Dean Martin-Jerry Lewis opus. Since Cy Howard, who wrote the original story, also wrote the screenplay, he must have approved of jazzing up a plot that is as obvious at times as a psychological case history. Perhaps Producer Hal Wallis has been hard put in finding material for these zany comedians who are now at the height of their popularity; their first three pictures added to their fan following but were no great shakes as movies. In any case their new effort is their best film to date; and if you're not too disturbed by its situation involving a frustrated son and a father who never grew up, you'll get some good laughs out of *"That's My Boy."*

It is the characterizations more than the plot, which drags a little in laboring its points, that prove so amusing. As "Jarring Jack" Jackson, the robust extrovert, the former All-American who thinks he's still carrying the ball, Eddie Mayehoff does a biting caricature. He's a puerile bundle of cliches that makes Babbitt look like an amateur. It's no wonder that his son "Junior" is tied up in psychosomatic knots. Junior wants to be a farmer, but papa wants Junior to go to his alma mater, make a name for himself in football and then come into his construction business. Jerry Lewis, complete with pills and bottles, plays Junior as the typical over-dominated son; and if he weren't so funny in his take-off, he'd be pathetic. Director Hal Walker lets these actors do their stuff in a big way, but he doesn't have much plot to deal with. The Senior Jackson gets his way about Junior's going to his college; he even hires a local football star (played by Dean Martin, who is also in good voice) to attend this same college, room with his son and give the less virile young man a few pointers along the way. Martin and Lewis make the most of the humorous possibilities of this situation of the tough guy and the sissy—until the plot steps in again: Junior falls for a psychology student (Marion Marshall) who uses him as a guinea pig while she and Junior's roommate get serious about each other. All this finally works out all right when the roommate helps Junior transfer some of his phobias and shed his inhibitions on the football field. But the psychology lessons in *"That's My Boy"* aren't to be taken too seriously; as a satirical farce the picture serves its purpose well, and Martin-Lewis fans will ask for little more. With this film the comedians will no doubt even pick up some new followers.

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JUST as *"That's My Boy"* uses the father-son set-up as a source for hilarious gags, so does *"When I Grow Up"* use it as an opportunity for reveling in sentimental

nostalgia. In fact *"When I Grow Up"* uses it twice, telling two stories: one in the present and the other as a flashback to the 90s when grandfather was a boy. In the present Bobby Driscoll plays a youngster who is beset with the woes of his age: the bewilderment of adolescence and parents who don't seem to understand him. Just as he and his grandfather (Charley Grape-win), who also feels misunderstood in this household, are about to run away, they read grandfather's boyhood diary. And it seems that back in the 90s grandfather (played in the flashback by Bobby Driscoll) was also misunderstood by *his father*. In fact that boy was sure his father (Robert Preston) didn't love him because he refused to let him play with his pal Duckface, whose mother was of ill repute, and because his sister seemed to be the favorite around the house.

But just as the 1890 youngster is about to run away and join the circus, he comes down with typhoid fever; and then the boy learns how much his father does love him. And when his mother (Martha Scott) consoles him later on his father's death, he makes his last entry in the diary: "When people love other people, why don't they show it or something before it's too late." It is the diary and this final entry that makes the boy in the present decide not to run away. He realizes that every generation has its father-son problems; and after this little Bobby makes his peace with his parents, he invites his lonely grandfather to go fishing. This screenplay, which was written and directed by Michael Kanin, is a pretty obvious and sentimental lecture in child psychology, but what saves it from sinking to radio's soap-opera level is the good acting throughout and Kanin's occasional inserts of realism into the sugar coating.

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THE lonely grandfather in *"When I Grow Up"* would have been fascinated by a few of the theories expounded by Clifton Webb in *"Mr. Belvedere Rings The Bell."* This is a movie version of *"The Silver Whistle,"* Robert McEnroe's play about the man who moves in on an old people's home and makes over the place to the satisfaction of its inhabitants. It has plenty of cute wisecracks and enough platitudes about being as old as you feel and several very affectionate oldsters (played by a large cast including Billy Lynn, Doro Merande, Harry Hines) to keep you awake during its entire running time, but you have every right to expect a movie to be a little more cinematic than this one is and to stop yapping long enough to give the camera a chance to do its stuff. Actually Clifton Webb, continuing the Belvedere characterization he started so playfully with baby sitting, is somewhat ill at ease trying to make things pleasanter or at least a bit lighter in this drab home. Although some of his schemes bear looking into, you won't believe any of this story as it goes its artificial way. But if it's only laughs you're looking for, you should find them here. And if you're middle-aged, watch out for Webb. He threatens to start on that group after he says good-bye to the waving and teary-eyed members of this rejuvenated home.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

A Note on Jacques Riviere

By MARTIN TURNELL

WHEN Jacques Rivière died of typhoid fever in 1925 at the early age of thirty-eight, European literature was deprived of one of the ablest and most interesting minds of our time. He was known to a small circle of English readers as the distinguished editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* and as the author of a number of remarkable critical essays which had appeared in its pages, but it can safely be said that he has never had the recognition he deserved in Anglo-Saxon countries.

His field was a wide one. It included religion and the novel as well as political and literary criticism. It is probable that his literary criticism will be considered his most lasting achievement, but it is with his religious writings that I am concerned here. They are among the most absorbing of contemporary religious documents and they throw a revealing light on the religious situation in France during the first quarter of the present century.

★

RIVIERE grew up during one of the most troubled periods of modern spiritual history. It was an age of individualism, skepticism, modernism. There was a widespread assumption that scientific discovery had undermined the foundations of historic Christianity and had discredited metaphysical speculation. This provided the unbeliever with an apparent justification for his unbelief, and among the more timid believers it led to attempts to reconcile religion and progress or to express Christian dogmas in terms of modern philosophical systems. Modernism was not, intellectually, impressive, but it was an interesting psychological phenomenon. In spite of its claims to be strictly scientific, it was much more an attitude of mind, a symptom, than a scientific theory. It was not the product of reasoned doubt, but of an unreasoning need of change; a feeling that in an age of progress religion must change in order to keep pace with changes which were taking place in other fields. This psychological need of change explains the hostility to dogma and discipline and the way in which French writers dwelt on spiritual "unrest." They came to regard faith as a "temptation"—Rivière himself uses the word—precisely because it would have brought a stability and an equilibrium which were alien to them.

The vicissitudes of the age are amply reflected in Rivière's work. His religious writings divide into two

groups. The letters written to Claudel and Alain-Fournier, his brother-in-law and the author of *Le Grand Meaulnes*, describe his own difficulties. He believed that his problems were not merely personal, but were common to many of his contemporaries. *A la Trace de Dieu* is therefore a new kind of apologetic, an "Epistle to the Intellectuals," in which he tries to find an antidote to them. The essay called *De la Foi* is a mixture of autobiography and apologetic which forms a link between the two groups. In discussing them, we must remember that Rivière's training was literary and that his reactions to religious problems were not those of a *thinker* but of an *artist*. For this reason, it must be said candidly that they are much less important as a contribution to apologetics than as what the French well call a *témoignage*.

Rivière was the son of a professor of medicine at the University of Bordeaux and was brought up in an atmosphere of rigid, unadventurous, middle-class piety. He reacted against it while still a school boy; but though faith was surrendered almost unconsciously, he was careful to hide his defection from his family. In the early letters to Fournier he speaks of religion with adolescent cynicism and is dismayed when he hears of the conversion of one of his favorite writers. The discovery of Claudel's *Tête d'or* when he was twenty gave him an immense shock. Here was a poet whom he admired above all others, whom he had declared to be "far greater than Dante" and who seemed to be entirely serious about the religion that he himself had abandoned so lightly. In February, 1907, he decided to write to Claudel and ask for his help:

"Here I am," he said, "twenty years old like anyone else, not particularly happy or unhappy. But I am troubled by an unrest [*inquiétude*], a terrible unrest which has been there all my life and leaves me no peace. . . . An unrest which brings with it the most voluptuous sensations, but also the sensation of utter despair."

"The worst thing of all," he says in the same letter, "the really terrible thing is that though I am torn by this conflict, this continual tension, this unrest and dissatisfaction, at bottom I adore them."

The second passage strikes a note which recurs nearly all through the correspondence. The most arresting factor in Rivière's outlook is his spiritual defeatism, his delight in his own weakness.

"But why," he asks in another letter, "but why *the* truth, the unique truth? Why that and not innumerable other truths to which we can give ourselves in turn? Why refuse myself to so many other beautiful things? You see what this means. It is Gide, and you will realize at once how much I am affected by him. But books only corrupt those who are naturally prepared to receive their poison."

There is no doubt an element of boastfulness in the last sentence, but Rivière shows already that he was a

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good psychologist. He had been deeply influenced by Gide, and his problem was not *logical* but *psychological*. In calling it an "illness" he displayed greater insight than his physician. It was indeed an affliction of his sensibility.

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CLAUDEL was very kind, but he seems to have underrated the complexity of the case. His suggestion—made in his first letter—that all that was needed was prayer, confession and communion brought small comfort to the patient. He was inclined to grow irritable when he found that the patient was not responding to treatment. But Rivière refused to be hurried and it was not until Christmas, 1913, that he was formally reconciled with the Church.

De la Foi was first published the year before Rivière's conversion. It is in part a spiritual and intellectual stock-taking in which he reviews the arguments used in the correspondence with Claudel and outlines his own apologetic. In the chapter called "Reasons for Believing" he writes:

"Not those advanced by Pascal who considered them to be universal and capable of convincing everyone. Under this title I merely claim to describe the movement of my own mind."

According to Rivière, religion is a personal problem. We feel the need to explain the universe. The religious explanation is true because it is the only one that satisfies us, but there are no arguments in favor of it which are universally valid. All that the believer can do is to describe the "movements" of his own mind. His success as an apologist depends on the extent to which the movement of his mind is representative and his difficulties common to his contemporaries. Religious conversion takes on a new meaning. It becomes primarily a matter of psychological adjustment and transformation. Rivière calls his work a "confrontation" of the mentality of the Christian and the modern mind.

"Our subject," he writes in *A la Trace de Dieu*, "is not to prove the truth of the Christian faith, to give reasons for believing this or that dogma. It is simply to penetrate into the interior of the Christian's thought, to show the logical coherence of his point of view."

In a letter to Claudel in 1907 he had said that he did not attach any "demonstrative value to philosophy" which he regarded as the most fascinating "game" precisely because it was "the most vain." This is still the burden of *A la Trace de Dieu*:

"Our methods of reasoning become exhausted even more quickly than our ways of feeling. What could be more outmoded than Plato's purely verbal dialectic or even Augustine's theory of memory? And even in scholastic reasoning there is something

that will no longer do. Even in the reasoning of Descartes as well."

This leads to a thoroughgoing religious pragmatism:

"There is no genuine science, no certain knowledge except where an experience corresponds to it. Metaphysics has no bearing on experience. Therefore metaphysics is vain."

The Christian dogmas, he concludes, can only be verified by experience: "The imagination is the faculty of the supernatural and puts us in contact with it."

I think this demonstrates what is meant by saying that Rivière's reactions to his problems were those of an artist.

★

GIDE declared roundly that Rivière was never one of his "disciples" and Claudel has told us, in his introduction to *A la Trace de Dieu*, that he was far from sharing all Rivière's theological and philosophical opinions. There is no doubt, however, that the anti-thesis Gide-Claudel stood for something real in Rivière's experience. It stood in a general way for the conflict between Individualism and Authority, but this conflict had deeper implications.

Rivière's was the familiar difficulty not merely of reconciling the fulness of life with the acceptance of dogmatic religion, but also of accepting the view that dogma is the condition which enables the Christian to have life and have it more abundantly. Claudel provided a corrective to certain weaknesses and extravagances, but Gide helped to keep alive his natural sensitiveness and to prevent him from being completely dominated by Claudel's rigid outlook. This set up a tension between *dogma* and *experience* which was not a passing phase, but a permanent condition. It explains Rivière's success as a literary critic. Pragmatism is decidedly dangerous in religion, but the literary critic is and must be essentially a pragmatist. He has to realize that whatever his personal beliefs, in literature no order can ever be the final order, that its life and vitality depend on perpetual change. Rivière arrived at a new conception of classicism because he saw that it was not something which had simply happened in the seventeenth century, but a way of apprehending experience which was to be found in Proust as well as Racine.

★

IT REMAINS to comment on another matter of some delicacy. Rivière's apologetic was clearly unsound and it is hardly surprising that his attachment to the Church was intermittent. This was a source of satisfaction to those who did not like his views and an embarrassment to his friends. I do not want to stress the personal issues here, but I do want to say something of their general implications.

Claudel and Rivière represent contrasted outlooks and they were both very much the product of the religious situation of their time. Claudel belongs to the Thomist

camp. Now the revival of Thomism was an attempt by the Church to counteract the philosophical confusion of the nineteenth century and it stands for an attitude of intransigent opposition to the disruptive tendencies of the age. "I should not like," said Rivière in a letter to Alain-Fournier, "to be confused with these 'modernists' who turn faith into a form of *inquiétude*, a perpetual recovery after doubt. If I do not believe, it is because I conceive faith as something unalterable and I cannot feel it as such."

In spite of his disclaimer, this passage does seem to describe Rivière's position and influence very neatly. He stood for an attitude of compromise and his place was really on the side of the Catholic modernists. I find Claudel's rigidity and intolerance excessively unsympathetic, but this does not mean that Rivière's view commends itself to me. On the contrary, his influence appears to have been deplorable. He was largely responsible for the cult of *inquiétude* which became fashionable in French intellectual circles between the wars, particularly among converts. He encouraged the lamentable habit of keeping and publishing private diaries in which the ebb and flow of faith was publicly paraded for the edification of friends. It was a sign of weakness and self-indulgence which produced a devitalized, self-centered spirituality which has nothing whatever to recommend it.

Of Note

Rome Waits

THE diocesan *Catholic Messenger* (410 Brady Street, Davenport, Iowa) carries a regular column by Msgr. Luigi Ligutti of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference. Here is a recent sample:

Rome never starts anything. It never did. It's not Rome's policy. Does this shock you? It should not, provided you have studied history. Does this take away from the glorious tradition of Christianity's Center, leadership, infallible guardianship? Not at all, rather it lends and adds authority, reliability even from a human viewpoint. Take, for example, devotions to saints, liturgical practices, yes even dogmatic declarations. They all started at the grass roots.

This historical verity runs contrary to many an accepted hypothesis on the part of some very innocent, sincere or otherwise, non-Catholics, particularly when they seek to tag the Catholic church with the stigma of authoritarianism.

Rome watches, Rome listens, Rome examines, Rome encourages or frowns upon, then finally, slowly and deliberately, she approves or condemns. No newfangled ideas and practices, no matter how plausible, how seemingly advantageous they be, are

THE CORPORATIVE STATE

by

JOAQUIN AZPIAZU, S.J.

Translated by

William Bresnahan, O.S.B.

\$4.00

The learned Jesuit, author of this work, is regarded in Europe as a most reliable authority on the subject of the corporative regime.

Most American readers are not aware of the extent to which corporative forms of economic and social life have developed in several European countries. In view of the likelihood that we are destined willy-nilly to take a hand in European affairs, we shall do well to become acquainted with this organization of society.

The fact that corporativism has in some countries become associated with dictatorship is misleading regarding the nature of a corporative regime, which does not include governmental absolutism in its program. With us, the period of ruthless capitalism has been followed by the towering might of organized labor and increased tension between employers and workers. Mutual understanding and cooperation, the calculated fruit of corporativism, seems to be the only sound remedy for that growing tension, as it is also the remedy advocated by successive popes. Let us at least familiarize ourselves with its workings and then adopt from it those elements congenial to our temperament and traditions.

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ever given Rome's backing. At the Papal audience on July 2 a Dutch young couple, I believe, asked His Holiness to give permission to parents to baptize their own children. Quick as a flash came the smiling reply, "Yes, in case of necessity."

This is all by way of introduction to my interpretation of the significance of the International Catholic Congress on Rural Life Problems. I know its beginnings, its standing ups and sitting downs, its successes, its failures, its joys and sorrows, so I can speak with some degree of authority.

"What do you want to accomplish?" We were asked that dozens of times. "What do you think you have accomplished by the Castel Gandolfo Congress?" We are asked this now.

We won't boast of the worldwide publicity, of the widespread interest, of the delegates from the four corners of the earth, of the tremendously significant Papal speech, of the Magna Charta of rural life drawn up by the ten commissions. All these are but beginnings. Neither you nor I will behold the final results. Thank God for that!

One always gets a hearing in Rome. A crackpot may get the run around, but heard he is, and so was I. Father Gremillion can tell you that, for he and I were sent to see Msgr. Pavan in July, 1948. In March, 1950 there was still vocal opposition. In September, 1950, written doubts were expressed. We just pushed on, and thank God, the Congress was held. *It was significant, it was fruitful, it was an historical event of import to the Church and to the world.*

As we drove out from the lovely gardens of Villa Montecucco we wore no crown of laurels, just beads of perspiration and tired feet. Bishop O'Hara and I huddled in the narrow back seat of the Fiat. We came up the hill of the Congress in a Fiat and we were returning toward Rome in a Fiat.

That in Latin means "Let it be done." We'll never change the name of our Rural Life car to "*Factum Est*" (It is done). The job is never finished. We are but beginning and 100 years hence it will still be "*Fiat*"! Not a car but a will to do it.

Cicero Riot

THE same issue of *The Catholic Messenger* carries quotations from an article in *Novena Notes* by Father Hugh Calkins, o.s.m., well known Chicago priest.

"Last month's riots proved just how bigoted many Catholics are," Father Calkins wrote. "The (Cicero) neighborhood and the mobs were filled with Catholics.

"Priests were strangely silent and lay people either cooperated in evil or stayed far away," he declared. "Only God knows the sins of hate and

injustice committed—and the grave injuries done Christ's Church among possible Negro converts.

"Have no illusions. Sinful injustice was done to Negroes. And it cries to heaven for vengeance."

"Such injustice," he declared, "grew and grows this hour through Catholics practicing and excusing the sin of segregation."

Father Calkins cited Pope Pius XII's ban against the oppression of national minorities and asserted that segregation is oppression, a grave social injustice. He urged all Catholics to work to eliminate the practice.

"When we approve injustices like those riots," he wrote, "we share guilt with the rioters. If we continue approving residential segregation and institutional segregation we are helping perpetuate injustice.

"God will hold us responsible. That's not personal opinion but the Church's moral teaching.

"The riots were meant to punish Negroes for daring to break the sinful segregation imposed by whites. Such retribution is gravely sinful. No Catholic can justify it even in private. Nor can true Catholics justify racial segregation."

Father Calkins urged Catholics to explode the fallacy that Negro ancestry is a "form of uncleanness."

"That's blind prejudice and race hate," he wrote. "Rank hypocrisy. It's hateful pride abominated by Christ.

"Deny that a Negro as a human individual is fully equal to every other person and you violate a fundamental principle of justice," he warned.

To Serve Truth

THE current issue of *Blackfriars* (34 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C. 1) recalls the original introduction to the review written by Father Vincent McNabb, o.p. in 1920.

In our aim of finding and telling the truth we will not primarily concern ourselves with what is good; or only with that highest good, the Truth. This is but to realize that transcendentals such as truth, must be sought for their own sake or they will not be found in their fulness. Truth-seeking and truth-telling must not be blended and weakened with enquiries into the economic, political, ethical or theological value of truth. Men should not accept the findings of science because they are useful; nor the axioms of mathematics because of their economic value. So too it is a kind of unconscious treason to believe in God (if that were possible) because it profits us in this world or the next. To serve the truth otherwise than because it is true is to withhold from the altar some of the sacrifice.

Books

Swanson. *Timothy Pember*. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.

THIS fine novel begins with a quotation from Dr. Johnson: "Solitude is dangerous to reason, without being favourable to virtue . . . the solitary mortal is certainly luxurious, probably superstitious, and possibly mad." Contrarily, one thinks of Pascal: "All the unhappiness of men arises from one single fact, that they cannot stay quietly in their own chamber." Who is right—Johnson or Pascal? Both, in the case of Humphrey Richard Anthony Swanson, Cambridge man, California university professor, grocer's clerk, plumber's assistant, and convict.

One morning this quiet Englishman-in-America sat in his room, alone and forty and reading seventeenth century English religious poetry. Possibly he was a little mad,

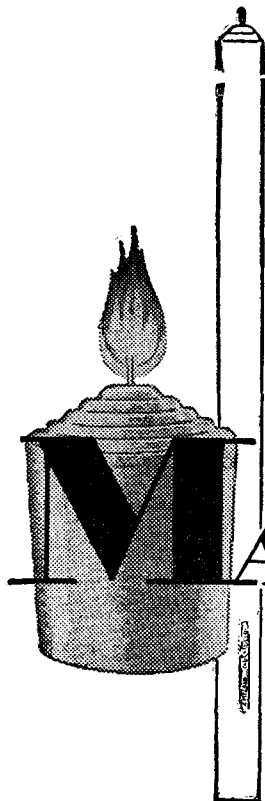
but more likely he was, as he put it later, sad and self-deceived. And that morning his fate intruded, even through his locked door, upon his solitude, bringing both poignant comedy and comical unhappiness. That comedy and unhappiness led, in turn, to involvement and love and life—altogether, happiness.

But this happiness, too, was to be transitional, leading to something calm and final, something amounting to acceptance, even resignation. Indeed, there is more than a hint of swansong about this book and this man — *Swanson*, so improbable a name for the reserved intellectual who sat alone that morning, and so right for the laborer living his brief, belated life alongside the city dump. This is his swansong, this one year in which, though stripped of everything, he comes to know peace.

"The last act crowns the play."

This line, by Quarles, Swanson had intended to give point to a lecture. Instead, he gave point to the line, for he regretted not his last act—one of mercy which brought him to prison—but his weakness in the face of it. Still, his quiet happiness remained, for he had found the truth in Bishop Taylor's words (Swanson ever retained the professor's love of quotation): "Since we stay not here, being people but of a day's abode . . . we must look somewhere else for an abiding city."

Timothy Pember, who wrote *The Needle's Eye* and who now lives in California, writes superbly. His words are right, so right that one almost fails to notice them as words, and that is the ultimate perfection. His observation is accurate and delicate, his control sure. He integrates and motivates with great economy, often sacrificing transition, yet with great skill and care. The result is a tight and subtle, though natural, style, rightly demanding full attention for full effect. He errs, I think, only once. In developing the rela-



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tionships and motivations of his characters, he devotes almost as much space to the other two members of the triangle as he does to Swanson himself. Since the book is *Swanson*, we could do with less, especially, about the husband in the case. Nevertheless Mr. Pember is a remarkable writer. In *Swanson* he has accomplished — and not superficially — in one shorter, better volume what Sartre has not finished in three: the evolution, in the mind of a middle-aged professor, of a philosophy and attitude that will, in a hopeless world, bring peace.

ROBERT WICHERT.

The Soviet Linguistic Controversy. Translated from the Russian Press by John V. Murra, Robert M. Hankin and Fred Holling. King's Crown Press. \$2.

THIS volume, one of the Columbia Slavic Studies, consists of translations of one article from the

April, 1950 issue of *Voprosy filosofii* and of the series of articles devoted to linguistics in *Pravda* in May and June, 1950. All of the articles are reprinted from *The Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, and Americans owe a vote of thanks to the Department of Slavic Languages of Columbia University and to the Rockefeller Foundation for publishing the book, particularly since the linguistics controversy in the USSR in the summer of 1950 did not attract such wide notice in this country as it did in England and France.

This reviewer, who is not a linguist or philologist, recommends this rather difficult book heartily to all interested in the Soviet Union, the development of Soviet thought, and the methods by which controversies are initiated and resolved there. The discussion concerning the validity of the theories and work of N. Ya Marr and his school is but one of the series of post-war ideological controversies, but it is the first such discussion since 1934 which has drawn the direct intervention of Stalin himself.

The fall of Marr (who died in 1934) from "the ardent patriot and true son of the party of Lenin and Stalin" and "model progressive Soviet scientist" of *Voprosy filosofii* of April, 1950 was very swift after Stalin's long statement in *Pravda* on June 20, 1950. "The world's greatest torchbearer in science" quickly indicated to Soviet linguists the errors in the Marrist school position: the belief that language is a part of the superstructure, the theory that there are class languages, the theory that there are or can be dialectical leaps in language or linguistic revolutions (Stalin's arguments and illustrations here are especially illuminating for everyone interested in the "development" of Stalinist thought), and the "Arakcheyev-like regime" which Marr's followers had been trying to establish in Soviet linguistics since 1945. After Stalin's statements, the controversy ended in the usual Soviet fashion with confessions of error, general salaams, numerous removals (including that of I. I. Meshchaninov, Director of the Institute of Lan-

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guages and Thought of the USSR Academy of Sciences, Marr's foremost disciple, and Stalin Prize First Class winner in 1946), new courses and curricula, the reorganization of research, and plans for new texts.

All of the ideological controversies within the Soviet Union since 1947 demonstrate not only the insistence of the Stalinists upon a monolithic culture but also Stalin's skillful use of "whirl." Perhaps the most important data derived from this controversy consist of the additional information it provides concerning the skill and resolution with which Stalin breaks up any and all concentrations of power in the Soviet Union.

ROBERT F. BYRNES.

The Cruel Sea. Nicholas Monsarrat. Knopf. \$4.

THE operations of the Royal British Navy with its background of proud tradition and brilliant victories would, in themselves, seem to guarantee an exciting work of fiction. And if the reader's attention is focused on corvettes, those small, risky and romantic vessels that earned much notice during the last war, well, success would appear to be assured.

Mr. Monsarrat, who was a skipper of a corvette, and, later, of a frigate, has chosen this kind of setting for his novel. His story is a salute to the men and the ships, the fighters of Britain on the cruel sea.

To animate his story Monsarrat has created a tall, silent, competent Englishman for the skipper; an intelligent journalist, completely dedicated to the war, as the first officer; and various other people who man the *Compass Rose*, and who signify, in one degree or another, the experiences, the natures and the reactions of men at war on the sea.

Although there are some small episodic sections revolving about marital infidelity, the bulk of the action derives from the missions of the corvette and the frigate. The terror of rough weather, the fear and excitement of anti-submarine measures, the strain of deck watch, the

complications of convey procedures are described with certainty and interest.

Nevertheless, this book does not succeed in being a realistic war story, or a convincing creation of human stress and endurance in time of war. For one thing, Mr. Monsarrat falls too easily and too often into hackneyed ways of phrasing and setting. For another, he cannot avoid the pit of sentimentality which swallows most writers who have actually fought in a battle unit, and which is

especially disabling to the man of words when he writes about men of action.

Captain Erikson and First Officer Lockhard become blurred by the author's genuine, understandable, but debilitating tears of affection. The stiff upper-lip captain and the above and beyond the call of duty mate grow excessively incorruptible and sacrificial. A grand attempt to define deaths at sea in terms of former life never rises above an artificial and uncertain outline. The love portions

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are abrupt, unbalanced and unreal. Then, like every other war story, past and present, it fails to convey the substance, the moment, of battle experience. This story merely repeats the journalists', the novelists' conception of war. It presents the picture of war as it exists in minds outside of battle, either apart from it or after it—it stems from reflection and the creation is necessarily, but disproportionately affected because time and the heart have influenced the hand.

GEORGE MILES.

20th Meridian. Robert Travers. Norton. \$3.00.

MANY a GI who happened to get a glimpse of the merchant mariner's life while being lugged across some body of water during World War II thought those crewmen had it made. But bacon-and-egg breakfasts, a constant supply of hot coffee, and overtime pay weren't the whole story. There were the sub-

marines, the sudden agony of seeing the ship ahead go down, the foul weather, the contemptible officers, the tedium and tensions of restricted shipboard life.

With a potential like that, Robert Travers, who experienced it all, might have written a good novel on a generally overlooked phase of the war. But this jerry-built vessel never seems to make port. Off to a good start with a whisky-laden freighter headed back in slow convoy from England to the States, manned by a motley crew antagonistic to each other and the world at large, and with an obsessive-compulsive alcoholic as first mate, the story soon falls apart. The narrative becomes episodic, and stock characters and situations are used freely to paste the parts together. Johnny, the runaway college boy; Red, the tough but idealistic union organizer; Slim, the villainous anti-union man are undeveloped and insubstantial. The easy flow of the writing and other evidences of technical skill would lead one to suspect that willingness

to apply a little more time and effort would have resulted in a better book.

PAUL V. FARRELL.

• REVIEWERS •

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GEORGE MILES is a free lance critic.

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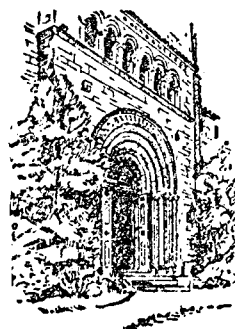
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by Msgr. Ronald Knox

Sermons so small that the author compares them to gnat stings (noting that "a gnat sting is better than no sting at all"). Each takes about a minute and a half to read, but a disproportionately long time to forget. They originally appeared in the London *Sunday Times*. *Ready September 5th.* \$2.25

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